

**“EMERGING TOGETHER”  
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION  
MAY 2005**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCES AND MATERIALS  
TO CELEBRATE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

In 1992, President George Bush signed into law a measure passed by the U.S. Congress permanently designating May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Prior to the passage of this law, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month was renewed annually by Executive Order.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is an opportunity for us to learn more about this diverse and rapidly growing community. Americans of Asian descent represent more than twenty-five Asian ethnic groups and speak over 50 languages and dialects. According to the 2000 Census the Asian Pacific American (‘APA’) community comprises about 4% of the U.S. population with large concentrations in Hawaii, New York, California, New Jersey and Texas. Some, like the Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos and Asian Indians, have ancestors who came to this country over 150 years ago, while others, like the Vietnamese, Cambodians and Hmongs are newcomers to this country. Similar to other immigrants, their heritage and culture have become intertwined with American society, a society that is a unique experiment in multicultural living.

In the past, the term “melting pot” has often been used to describe the assimilation of immigrants into American life. Since then, that metaphor has slowly given way to a “mixed salad” or “tapestry” imagery, emphasizing the uniqueness of each ingredient or piece of yarn that contributes to the taste of the salad or the pattern of the tapestry. These metaphors are especially apt when describing the APA community. The most common “Asian” experiences for Americans relate to food, movies and music. Whether the Asian musical influence in Yo-Yo Ma’s cello playing, the setting of the Academy award winning film “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” directed by Ang Lee, or the Indian roots of “bhangra”, a popular dance form influencing hip-hop today, Asian culture has not been “absorbed” into the melting pot; rather it has influenced whatever medium it has touched. The blending of East and West can also be found in “fusion” cuisine, a popular restaurant trend in large metropolitan areas. The ever-increasing variety of Asian foods found in major grocery chains and gourmet stores also indicates that Americans are not only eating “Asian” in restaurants but are welcoming it in their homes. The works of authors like Amy Tan (“Joy Luck Club”) or Maxine Hong Kingston (“The Woman Warrior”) have also made the best-seller lists, a testament to the universal appeal of the human themes found in their Asian story-telling.

In addition to the “stars” in the Asian American community, there are others whose names may not be familiar but whose daily contributions to American life are felt by many of us in large metropolitan areas—the Korean greengrocer, the Indian manager at the convenience store, the Filipino doctor, the Indian high-tech entrepreneur, the

Vietnamese fisherman in Houston and the Pakistani cab driver in New York. We are not implying that these are the only jobs held by these different ethnic groups, but we illustrate them to show that we may have daily encounters with a diverse group of Asian Pacific Americans without even realizing it.

The materials provided by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AOUSC) may be utilized in many ways. Ideally, it would be helpful to create an “APA Heritage” committee which can coordinate the celebration activities, including choosing elements of the “kit” that we are providing you. Whether or not you have a committee, you may still utilize the materials and resources of the “kit” taking into consideration the demographics of your city and the level of interest of your employees. We suggest that your court unit executive send out a letter to the employees acknowledging May as APA Heritage Month and encouraging the staff to participate in planned activities.

## 1. General Information About Asian Pacific Americans

*“Emerging Together” – In Celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month* is a 15-page reference section (Tab 2) providing a brief history of immigration by Asian ethnic groups, laws and court cases affecting their status in the United States, and general demographic information.

Possible uses:

- Use as a study guide for informal discussion groups.
- Post different sections of the *“Emerging Together”* materials each week on email so the information goes out in installments, there are 4 sections so you may want to send one a week for the month of May (use the guide in conjunction with the “Just for Fun” quizzes described below).
- Make the reference guide available in the library as a resource.
- Send the reference guide in its entirety to the employees as an email attachment for them to have as a reference.
- Encourage lawyers and judges to discuss the laws and cases mentioned in *“Emerging Together”* and possibly write a short essay on the significance of the cases and laws on the larger community.
- Encourage employees to share their stories about how their ancestors’ experience may be similar or different from the experience of Asian Pacific Americans. With their consent, these stories may be posted on email or the website.
- Supplement the *“Emerging Together”* materials distribution with the “Milestones in APA History” segment described below.

## 2. Specific Asian Ethnic Groups

Asian American and Pacific Islanders can be broken down into four geographically-based groups: (1) Pacific Islanders, mostly Native Hawaiians, Samoans, and Guamanians; (2) Southeast Asians, largely comprised of

Indochinese from Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Indonesians and Filipinos; (3) East Asians, including Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans; and (4) South Asians, including those from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tibet and the Maldives. Though members within the four groups share geographic similarities, they vary greatly in terms of language, history and culture.

As previously mentioned, Asian Pacific Americans represent nearly 50 countries and ethnic groups, so it would be too lengthy to provide summaries of all of the different ethnic groups. We focused on the 12 Asian ethnic groups that are the most populous groups in the United States. Information for each group may vary but generally includes immigration pattern, language, notable figures and organizations that may serve as a resource about the particular group. Each can be a separate document so you may choose to tailor your selection based on the specific APA groups who have settled in your geographical region.

Cambodian Americans	Vietnamese Americans
Filipino Americans	Chinese Americans
Hmong Americans	Japanese Americans
Laotian Americans	Korean Americans
Pacific Islanders	Thai Americans
Pakistani Americans	Indian Americans.

#### Possible Uses:

- Post as separate attachments on email to the employees; there are 12 ethnic groups so 3 can be sent each week in the month of May.
  - Post the set of 12 on the website or as an email attachment and encourage employees to find out more about these groups.
  - Make the information available in the library as a resource.
  - Use the organizations listed for each Asian ethnic group as a resource in identifying potential speakers, entertainment, or caterers for APA Heritage month celebrations.
  - Supplement this segment with the “Milestones in APA History” segment described below.
3. APA Population by State is from the 1999 Population Estimates Program of the United States Census Bureau (analysis of 2000 Census data across states not yet available). This table would provide offices and courts with information to see how their state is ranked in terms of APA population.
  4. “Milestones in Asian Pacific American History” – provides a timeline chronicling significant events in APA history from 1565-1990.

Possible Uses:

- May be used as a stand alone resource sent to employees or can be combined with the “Just-for-Fun” Quizzes, *“Emerging Together”* materials or the Specific Groups segment.
  - May be a discussion topic if an informal group is formed to discuss simultaneous events happening in the larger American society during the period mentioned in the timeline.
5. Four “Just for Fun” Quizzes. These are intended to be self-tests so that employees may test their knowledge of various facets of the APA community. Answers should not be sent along with the quizzes. Make the answers available a day or two later.
- Interesting Facts Challenge – origins of words and toys, “little-known” facts.
  - Celebrity Challenge – actors, politicians, artists and other distinguished members of the APA community.
  - History and Politics Challenge – historical events, laws, politics.
  - Culinary Challenge – Asian foods and cuisine.

Possible Uses:

- May be sent out via email along with the *“Emerging Together”* materials (or sections of it) as a set or one each week during May.
  - Use as topics for discussion if an informal group is formed so people can share their reactions and perhaps their scores.
  - Combine the quizzes with queries to employees about their own knowledge or experience in the subject areas covered by the quizzes as it relates to their own ethnic groups. This allows them to share little known facts, characteristics or accomplishments of their own groups. With their consent, their submissions may be posted on email. This provides a forum for people to think about their own ancestry and share their insights.
6. Recommended Reading and Viewing List is an interactive resource that employees may use to link to different resources depending on their interest. The resources on the list include the following topics: history, the arts, cuisine, music, politics, pop culture, languages, religions, festivals, history and literature. There are also sources listed for Asian Pacific American Heritage month posters.

The Fair Employment Practices Office (FEPO) previewed several videos and created a recommended list of videos. Some videos are available on loan from the FEPO. You may also rent or purchase videos of interest directly from the sources listed. The videos may be shown during lunch hour or at a celebration event. You may want to encourage employees to form a discussion group after the video screening to discuss their reactions.

7. APA Judges List is a listing of all the federal judges of Asian descent as compiled by the American Bar Association. The courts and offices may use this resource to invite speakers for APA Heritage Month celebrations.

Court units that wish to invite speakers who require a fee to participate in the upcoming heritage celebrations may pay an honorarium if the presentations are in line with the court unit's EEO objectives. See Comptroller General opinion, Army - Incidental Costs of Commemorative Luncheon for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., B-208, 729, May 24, 1983. Speakers' honoraria should be paid from the S & E Account, Budget Object Code 2559. Unit Executives are asked to use budgetary discretion when contracting with speakers for services.